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LETTER: Lifeline program is important link to world

By CHUCK EATON published Tuesday, September 1, 2015 0 comments

Many of us take for granted that we can pick up our phone, dial our friends and family, and stay connected with the rest of the world. Phone service has become such a routine part of our lives that we hardly even think about it anymore.

But imagine what it would be like if you were suddenly laid off from your job and couldn't afford to pay your phone bill. Imagine if you worked one or two jobs and barely made enough to pay the rent and had to sacrifice telephone service.

Unfortunately, too many people in the United States and in Georgia face this problem every day and do not have even basic telephone service. In our state, thousands of people cannot afford any kind of telephone service and are disconnected from friends, family and emergency services. These consumers cannot even dial 911.

There is good news, though. Many of these consumers may qualify for an assistance program — Lifeline — that discounts a portion of their telephone service. Lifeline provides qualified consumers savings on basic monthly telephone service.

As chairman of the Georgia Public Service Commission, I am participating in a national event to raise awareness of, and participation in, these important public-assistance programs. As part of National Lifeline Awareness Week, Sept. 14-20, 2015, the commission is promoting more public education events and recognition with a proclamation from Gov. Nathan Deal.

Lifeline helps low-income consumers connect to the nation's communications networks, find jobs, access health care services, connect with family, and call for help in an emergency.

Our goal is to connect as many people as possible. We hope that by raising awareness of Lifeline, we can ensure that more consumers can call their friends, their families, and life-saving services. In today's highly interconnected world, no one should be left out.

For more information, contact the Georgia Public Service Commission at 404-656-4501 or toll free at 1-800-282-5813, or visit our website at **www.psc.state.ga.us**.

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